Kurt Gossweiler

The mistakes of the KPD in dealing with the proletariat

The historian Dr. Kurt Gossweiler carried out a highly important, but nonetheless hitherto little-known study as early as 1957 with his characteristic thoroughness, examining the history of the German workers' movement to determine how German monopoly capital was able to harness the majority of the working class for its own purposes. By exploiting political parties, the bourgeoisie deepened the division of wage earners. This led to a fragmentation that has not been overcome to this day, even in times of crisis. Specifically, it is about the role of the SPD as a pillar of the bourgeois order and the mistakes and failures of the KPD in dealing with even the smallest left-wing deviations, which had serious consequences. It is astonishing that the study was not even taken note of in the leading circles of the SED in 1986, when the opportunistic direction of the so-called “perestroika” in the USSR had long been recognizable. So a time had to come when it became increasingly clear which opportunist and revisionist forces had also gained a foothold within the SED and what had actually led to the fall of the socialist world system. Kurt Gossweiler already had a very clear idea of the modern revisionism of the anti-communist Khrushchev clique at that time. Kurt Gossweiler wrote about his work in November 1986: “When I had finished writing it, I myself was shocked at the harsh criticism of KPD policy I had arrived at and was already half determined not to use it as the basis for a circle. However, I gave the manuscript to a few comrades I knew from the circle to read. Their reaction finally convinced me to entrust the paper only to the archives: they, who for the most part were completely in line with the Khrushchev positions I hated, were enthusiastic about my “reckoning with dogmatism”. In the situation at the time, I realized that it would have been extremely damaging to the party to go public with such an elaboration. Even now, I don't think the time has come to publish it. So let others decide later whether and when it might be useful to present this study for discussion. [1] And 15 years later, in September 2001: Today, almost half a century after its preparation and a decade after the temporary victory of the counter-revolution over European socialism, the publication of this study can be useful in several ways. Firstly, as proof that communist self-criticism, however sharp, has nothing in common with the shameful denunciation of the KPD, SED and GDR by Gysi, Brie and Zimmer; nor does it have anything to do with the despicable ingratiation of the apologists to those in power today for a little participation in their popular fraud and the dismantling of social and democratic structures, i.e. the dismantling of what the working people of the FRG have achieved since the middle of the last century, not least thanks to the existence of the GDR. On the other hand, because since the spread of German imperialism to the territory of the GDR after the fall of the Wall, which has now actually proved to be an anti-fascist protective wall, fascism has received such a boost that older people almost feel they have been transported back to the beginning of the 1930s, and the fight against fascism - a fascism that today is trivialized as “right-wing extremism” - has once again become a top priority. The lessons learned from the fight against fascism at that time have thus also gained a

new topicality. I hope that the readers of this study - despite the fact that it was written a long time ago - will see these reasons as justifying its publication. [2] And so Kurt Gossweiler also dealt with such - to put it mildly - unfortunate formulations as “social fascism” and “Soviet Germany” and examined the reasons why a “united front” against the then emerging fascism did not materialize. The formulation “social fascism” would only be correct if the SPD could become the bearer of the fascist dictatorship, i.e. the open, terrorist dictatorship over the entire working class and its organizations, without thereby ceasing to be social democracy, i.e. the agency of the bourgeoisie, whose specific value for the bourgeoisie consists in the fact that it possesses the confidence of a considerable part of the organized working class. But this is impossible.[3] There were a number of mistakes and errors... All the mistakes and errors mentioned and others contributed to the fact that the KPD greatly underestimated the danger of Hitlerite fascism for the workers' movement (Note 28). The main error was that it did not recognize clearly to the end that the goal of all groups of German monopoly capital since the replacement of the Hermann Müller government was and had to be the inclusion of the Nazis in the government, the replacement of one pillar of their rule - the SPD - by the other - the NSDAP. [4] What would have been necessary? In order to recognize all this in the situation at that time, however, a radical break with all the old ideas and a brilliant view of the new possibilities of the revolutionary movement, which were only just beginning to emerge in their germinal form, in the darkness of the future, were necessary. Lenin possessed this vision, no one after him, not even his best pupil, Stalin, nor such outstanding leaders of the international proletariat as Dimitroff, Thorez and Togliatti. [5] 2 The famous “Letter to the German Communists” should also be mentioned here. There Lenin wrote in 1921: “This hatred - the noblest, most sublime feeling of the best of the enslaved and exploited masses - blinded the people, deprived them of the possibility of thinking in cold blood, of working out their own correct strategy in response to the brilliant strategy of the armed, organized capitalists, shrewdly supported by France, England and America, and cunningly guided by the ‘Russian experience’. [6] Oh, and by the way: Stalin... Kurt Gossweiler wrote about this: On Stalin: a) Stalin's authority in the international labor movement - fully deserved. Lenin's best pupil. b) It is to Stalin's credit that he threw his authority into the balance for the Thälmann Central Committee. c) Stalin's limitations: tendency to coarsen and to stencil: not free of left-wing radical tendencies. However, Stalin's (and Thälmann's) radicalism should not be equated with the radicalism of the petty-bourgeois ultra-left (Ruth Fischer, etc.), but a proletarian radicalism, so to speak, which fears no difficulties and does not shy away from them, and which never leaves the class line. Stalin (like Thälmann) always resolutely opposed the equation of social democratic workers with social democratic leaders. Stalin's (like Thälmann's) most outstanding quality: loyalty to the cause of the proletarian revolution, irreconcilable hatred of all enemies of the proletariat. Stalin lacked Lenin's gift of examining what the enemy and opponent said to see whether there was not something true, something useful in it. At this time, Stalin himself had, so to speak, “not yet finished learning”. Six years later, he demonstrated a masterful command of Lenin's strategy and tactics (non-aggression treaty with Germany). In contrast to Lenin: no personal knowledge of the Western European workers' movement. For all these reasons, Stalin, for all the help the KPD

owed him, was not able to correct the mistakes of the KPD at the time, but rather, together with the leadership of the CI, often encouraged them in their wrong attitude. [7] Quotes: [1] Kurt Gossweiler: How could this happen? Vol. 2, p.6f. [2] ibid. p.7. [3] ibid. p.43. [4] ibid. p.49. [5] ibid. p.54. [6] V.I. Lenin, Werke, vol.32, pp.537-548 or: AW6, vol.VI, pp.342-354. [7] ibid. p.79. Source: Kurt Gossweiler: How could this happen? Collection of Kurt Gossweiler's analyses, papers, criticisms, speeches and letters published in the KPD's publication series, in offen-siv and KAZ. Publisher: KPD, offen-siv, Freidenker-Verband, GRH, Eulenspiegel-Verlag. 2017, vol. 2, contact and orders: redaktion@offen-siv.com - Tel./Fax: 05572 - 999 22 42 3